

Men In Black

A Preliminary Report

by Robert Bull



First Edition: August 1997

Published by
British UFO Research Association (BUFORA) Ltd
BM BUFORA
London WC1N 3XX

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Introducing Men In Black

Men In Black, also known as MIBs, are mysterious characters who sometimes question, threaten and harass UFO witnesses and researchers.

They dress in black suits (hence their appellation) and are usually described as having 'oriental' features. They tend to pose as military or secret service personnel, often producing (albeit briefly) identity cards. They appear and behave in a way which leaves the witness thinking that they are not human, although this impression usually only forms after the MIBs have left.

MIBs are popularly described as:

- appearing in threes
- travelling in large, black, old-model cars (usually Cadillacs in the USA), which appear to be brand new and have untraceable registrations
- having 'dark' complexions
- appearing only rarely outside the USA
- possessing knowledge known only to the witness.

We shall see later that whilst some MIB cases certainly do possess some or all of these characteristics, it is certainly not true that the majority of such cases do.

The most celebrated MIB case was that reported by UFO investigator and author Albert K. Bender. In 1953 he was allegedly 'silenced' by three MIBs.

This report is part of an ongoing project started in 1995 by the BUFORA Research Committee.

The Albert K. Bender Case

In April 1952 Albert K. Bender, a factory supervisor, aged 31, formed the International Flying Saucer Bureau (IFSB), based in Bridgeport, Connecticut. The IFSB grew rapidly, soon having branches in 48 American states as well as in other countries.

The IFSB suddenly closed down in September 1953. Bender claimed that he had the 'secret' of flying saucers, which he wrote down as a thesis which he then posted to a friend he felt he could trust.

The following day, Bender claims, he was visited by three men dressed in black suits, one of whom *had with him the thesis*. Two of the men told Bender that his theory was essentially correct, and they filled him in on the missing details. What the MIBs had to say so appalled Bender that he readily agreed to disband the IFSB and do no more work on flying saucers; he also agreed to tell no-one of his findings.

'They were pretty rough with me', Bender said. 'Two men did all the talking, while another one kept watching all the time. He didn't take his eyes off me. I might add that I was terribly sick for three days after I saw those three men and also frightened beyond reason.' Bender's wall of silence following the visit convinced his friends that he was telling the truth.

Later, Bender claimed, he telephoned a friend and mentioned his theory and the visit of the three men. Immediately after hanging up, the telephone rang. A male voice said that he knew of Bender's conversation and that he had made a 'bad slip' and warned him to be more careful in future.

One of Bender's fellow researchers, a man who grew to be one of his closest friends, was Gray Barker. Barker joined the IFSB

as its West Virginia representative soon after its formation in April 1952, becoming its Chief Investigator in January 1953.

The New Haven Fireball

Two other IFSB representatives, who were to play key roles in the saga that was about to unfold, were Dominick ('Dom') Lucchesi and August ('Augie') Roberts. Roberts it was who investigated a peculiar incident which took place on August 19th, 1953, the day when, according to certain pyramidologists who had been poking around inside the Great Pyramid of Egypt, the world was due to end.

The residents of New Haven, Connecticut, probably thought that the prediction had come true when a loud 'swoosh' was heard at about 9 pm. Buildings trembled, lights dimmed and one woman had a miscarriage as a result the disturbance.

There was only one witness to the cause of the disturbance, which was a red ball of fire, six to eight inches in diameter, which crashed through a signboard before continuing on its way, leaving a hole more than a foot wide in the 20-gauge steel of the sign.

Roberts, on arriving at the scene, pried loose from the edge of the hole a sample of metal, obviously not part of the sign itself, which he sent to Bender for analysis. Bender never announced the results of the analysis, perhaps, Barker speculated, because of subsequent events at the IFSB headquarters in Bridgeport.

The Closedown

September 16, 1953. Bender wrote a routine letter to Barker, praising Barker's article for the next (October) issue of *Space Review*. The whole tone of the letter seemed strange to Barker, seeming somewhat stilted and formal, not like his friend's usual style at all. The third paragraph was the strangest part of all: 'I

do not know if I advised you or not, but do not accept any more memberships until after the October issue of *Space Review* is in your hands.'

The next day Barker received a tape from Lucchesi, a verbal account of a recent telephone conversation that had taken place between Roberts and Bender. He told Roberts what Barker already knew, that the next issue of *Space Review* would somehow be significant.

Bender seemed reticent during the telephone conversation, but Roberts kept pushing him until he finally blurted out: 'I know the secret of the disks!' He added that 'three men' had visited him and had pledged him to silence. Curiously, Bender claimed, the three men had confiscated all back issues of *Space Review*, even though hundreds of copies of the magazine had already been distributed to IFSB members world-wide.

Bender said that the three men had largely dictated the contents of the next issue of *Space Review*. He finished the call by telling Roberts that 'The truth is *fantastic!*'

Bender Interviewed

On 4 October 1953, Bender agreed to meet Roberts and Lucchesi. He insisted that the conversation not be recorded in any way but, unbeknown to him, Roberts, making the excuse of an upset stomach necessitating frequent visits to the toilet, made notes.

The account is long and monotonous, and is not reproduced in full here. Some of Lucchesi's questions, and Bender's answers, are:

Q: When did the three men visit you?

A: I can't answer that.

Q: Who were the men?

A: I can't answer that.

Q: Were they from the government?

A: I can't answer that.

Q: Do saucers come from space?

A: I can't answer that.

Q: Are the saucers real? Are they made of something solid?

A: I can't answer that.

Q: Can you tell me your source of information?

A: I was turning a theory over and over in my mind. When I got some actual names and places to back it up *I submitted it to someone*. [Italics mine, *Auth.*] Then the men came.

Q: Who was that 'someone' you mention?

A: I can't answer that.

Q: Does the government know about saucers?

A: They have known what they are for two years.

Q: Will they tell the people what they are?

A: It has got to a point where they will have to, if not within five months from now, not for about four years.

Q: Why can't you talk freely about this thing?

A: Just before the men left one of them said, 'I suppose you know you're on your honor as an American. If I hear another word out of your office you're in trouble.'

Q: Did you notice what the men wore?

A: They wore the same type of clothes and hats. Dark clothes and black hats.

Q: Do they know about Gray, Dom and me?

A: They had all of your addresses and details about you with them with the papers they had in their hands.

Q: Why do you delay answering each of my questions for a few seconds?

A: I'm afraid of slipping; if I do I can get into a lot of trouble.

An obviously nervous Bender was giving nothing away.

The Last Issue of Space Review

Barker eagerly opened the October 1953 issue of *Space Review* when it arrived in the mail. It contained two cryptic items:

'LATE BULLETIN.

A source, which the IFSB considers very reliable, had informed us that the investigation of the flying saucer mystery and the solution is approaching its final stages.'

'This same source to whom we had preferred data which had come into our possession, suggested that it was not the proper method and time to publish this data in *Space Review*.'

The other item:

'STATEMENT OF IMPORTANCE.

The mystery of flying saucers is no longer a mystery. The source is already known, but any information about this is being withheld by orders from a higher source. We would like to print the full story in *Space Review*, but because of the nature of the information we are very sorry that we have been advised in the negative.'

'We advise those engaged in saucer work to please be very cautious.'

Barker was confused by the last sentence. Did it mean that he himself might receive a 'visit' if he continued his own research into the saucer mystery? Barker decided to ignore Bender's warning. He must solve the flying saucer mystery, and he must find out what had happened to Bender.

Maury Island

Barker had a nagging feeling that he had heard of 'men in dark clothes' before. Suddenly it came to him – Maury Island! He found his Maury Island file, which told of an incident which took place at sea near Maury Island, Tacoma, Washington State.

The principal witness, Coast Guard Commander Harold Dahl, claimed he saw a formation of six flying saucers, one of which appeared to be in trouble. This saucer spewed out molten metal fragments into the water and onto the shore, samples of which Dahl was later able to gather.

What struck Barker was that the morning after the incident Dahl said he had received a visit at his home from a man who *wore a black suit*, and who invited him out to breakfast at a restaurant. As they sat down to breakfast, the man told Dahl everything that had happened to him at Maury Island the day before, down to the most minute detail. The visitor finished by saying to Dahl that 'If he loved his family and didn't want anything bad to happen he would not discuss the experience with anyone.'

Could the same man, in the company of others, have visited Bender? Unlikely, thought Barker, lots of people wore black suits. Or could he have 'picked up' on the man in black in the Maury Island¹ account, and decided to pretend, for some reason, that he had had a similar 'visit' himself?

¹ The Maury Island case was eventually shown to be a hoax. The 'molten metal' was plutonium slag from the Atomic Energy Commission's (AEC's) nearby plant. The 'man in black' was an AEC security agent.

Barker vowed that the next time he was in New York he would go, with Roberts and Lucchesi, to talk to Bender personally.

An Australian Connection?

Bender remained tight-lipped about his 'visitors' and about what he knew. The three friends formed the impression that he *wanted* to tell them what he knew, but was too afraid.

He did, however, tell them about a letter he had received from Edgar Jarrold, head of the Australian Flying Saucer Bureau (the AFSB, formed at about the same time as the IFSB). In the letter, Bender said, Jarrold told of how *he* had received a visit, although in his case there was only *one* visitor, who told him information about saucers which amazed him 'beyond description'. The stranger emphasised that Jarrold was to tell no-one of what had been revealed to him – not even his wife.

Barker wrote to Jarrold, who replied confirming that he had contacted Bender, and revealing that he had received four visits from the 'stranger'. The strangest part of his visitation came when he was asked what he thought would happen to extraterrestrial visitors if their saucer 'landed close to Sydney or any other large city'. He replied that he thought that the visitors would be 'murdered out of hand' but that he thought that 'great care would be taken to capture their space vehicle undamaged'.

Jarrold's visitor announced that this 'dangerous ignorance and hostility' was the 'main reason stopping extraterrestrial beings landing openly at present'. He also gave his opinion that 'horrifying destructive forces' could be used against mankind, but that the visitors 'sought only friendly contact'.

Jarrold said that on the stranger's first visit he had produced evidence attesting to his

'position and qualifications', although Jarrold did not give any more detail on this. Jarrold also reported receiving 'mysterious' telephone calls and experiencing poltergeist activity. It seemed to Barker that whilst Jarrold's visitor acted differently to Bender's three men, there was enough similarity to make him think that the two events were similar, perhaps even connected.

Barker scanned a copy of the AFSB's *Australian Flying Saucer Magazine* that he had received several weeks ago, but hadn't read. The editorial in the November issue of the magazine told of 'sensational happenings' at the headquarters of the IFSB in Bridgeport, and referred to a 'joint investigation' being proposed by the IFSB, the AFSB and Civilian Saucer Investigation (CSI (New Zealand)) to look into 'a theory re saucers supplied by Mr Bender'. Could it be that the IFSB and the AFSB were being 'leaned on' to stop this 'joint investigation'?

Barker continued his investigations into Bender until mid-1955, but was unable to unearth any fresh clues, although he did discover some interesting data, with possible MIB implications, relating to Edgar Jarrold, Harry Fulton, and James Moseley in the USA. He also began thinking more and more about a 'South Pole' saucer theory which Bender had once mentioned. (When Lucchesi interviewed Bender, he had 'visibly started' when Lucchesi had asked him 'Does this have anything to do with the South Pole?').

Bender finally broke his silence in 1962.

Bender Tells All?

Almost 10 years after closing the IFSB, Bender finally appeared to have decided to tell his story. His book, *Flying Saucers and the Three Men*, was published by Gray Barker's Saucerian Books. In it, the jacket text claimed, Bender tells of 'the identity

of the three men in black' and 'where the flying saucers come from.

Early Signs

Bender's strange experiences began on the evening of 30 July, 1952, when the telephone rang. There was no one on the line but Bender felt that he was being told, telepathically, not to delve into the flying saucer mystery any further. A strange throbbing sound then gave way to the sound of the normal dialling tone, without any sound of the receiver being replaced.

About three months after his strange telephone call, Bender was on his way home from the cinema one evening when he suddenly developed a throbbing headache. He saw a bluish flash in the sky, he felt as if he was being lifted from the ground, and once again a voice, in his head, seemed to be telling him to forget about the IFSB.

The local cinema again played a part in Bender's strange experiences. In November 1952, Bender was in the cinema when he became aware of someone in the seat next to him, although he hadn't noticed anyone walk up and sit down. A man was sitting there, a man with eyes 'like flashlight bulbs' which seemed to burn right into him. Bender, beginning to feel the by now familiar throbbing in his head, closed his eyes. When he opened them again, the man was gone, but on looking around he was startled to find the man seated on the opposite side of him now, still with those burning eyes!

At no point had Bender noticed the man arrive or move, but one thing he did notice was that the man's clothing was '*too neat*'. [*Italics mine - Auth.*] Thoroughly shaken by now, he moved to a different part of the cinema and sat down – only to find, after a few minutes, that the man was there again, sitting behind him!

Bender left the auditorium at this point and complained to the manager who, with the aid of his torch, looked for the man, but he was nowhere to be seen. On his way home, he had yet another encounter with the man while window shopping. He complained to the police, but the policeman who came could find nothing.

In February 1953, Bender had another warning of what was to come. He was in his kitchen when he heard the sound of footsteps coming from above, although he knew he was the only person in the house. He went upstairs to his bedroom where he saw a bluish glow in a corner, in which he saw a face with glowing eyes beginning to form. Afraid, he shouted 'Cut the kidding and come out of there!', at which point the glow disappeared, leaving behind a sulphurous odour.

On 15 March 1953, Bender was lying dozing on his bed at home when a cold chill hit his body, his head began to ache terribly, and the sulphurous odour returned. He opened his eyes and to his amazement he seemed to be looking at his own body from a point three feet above it!

The Nightmare Begins

Suddenly a voice filled his head: 'We have been watching you and your activities. Please be advised to discontinue delving into the mysteries of the universe. We will make an appearance if you disobey.' Bender replied (although his lips did not move), asking why the voice seemed so unfriendly. 'We have a special assignment and must not be disturbed by your people', came the reply. 'We are among you and know your every move, so please be advised we are here on your earth.'

With this the voice faded away, but Bender felt as though he was being watched. His body felt as though it was dropping, and he found himself back on his bed. His room was full of a yellowish mist, in which he

could just make out a man-shaped shadow, which disappeared as he raised himself from his bed. He felt sick in his stomach and horribly confused. Was this real or was he losing his mind?

Around this time, Bender confided in two leading members of the IFSB, telling them what had happened and that he proposed to publish an account of his experiences in next July's *Space Review*. They were unsympathetic, and threatened to resign from the IFSB if he went ahead with his plan. He wrote the account anyway and locked it away in a box. When he went to the box a few days later the account had disappeared – and the box contained the by now familiar sulphurous odour.

Bender's most frightening experience so far happened when he returned from a two-week vacation in July 1953. Unlocking the door of his 'den', he smelled the sulphurous odour again, and he noticed his radio was on, even though he knew he had switched it off before he had left.

Later, Bender was about to retire when he started to feel that he was about to have another visit, and sure enough three shadowy figures slowly began to crystallise out of a bluish glow in his room; three men dressed all in black, with black Homburg-style hats that partially obscured their faces. The eyes of all three figures suddenly lit up, the pain above Bender's eyes became almost unbearable, and he began to receive a message.

The message said that the men recognised Bender as someone who was dedicated to answering the flying saucer question, adding, sinisterly, that his researches may lead him to some harm and that no one would believe anything that they told him. The men had nothing to fear from him, the message continued, that he would not deflect them from carrying out their plans on Earth, and that they had already killed people who had become too inquisitive.

They further revealed that they had 'craft' hidden at a remote spot on Earth.

The message finished by saying that the men wished Bender to 'come with them' at a time to be announced soon. They left him a small piece of metal, which they said was to be kept in a secure, secret place. He was to contact the men again in two days time by holding the piece of metal, turning on his radio, closing his eyes and repeating the word 'Kazik'.

Then the men were gone, leaving Bender lying on his bed, matted with sweat. He felt something in his hand – the piece of metal! At last he had the physical proof he had been looking for! He locked it in his strongbox, then went to sleep. When he awoke next morning, he went immediately to the strongbox. The piece of metal wasn't there! Had he imagined the whole experience?

Two days later, at the appointed time for the next 'visitation', Bender went to his room and checked the box again. The piece of metal was there, exactly where he had left it after his last experience. He took the metal out and began to think about who he could show it to. At this point the metal began to glow, quickly becoming red hot, forcing him to drop it. Obviously the men didn't want him to reveal this evidence!

Revelations

Bender held the metal in his hand and started repeating the word 'Kazik'. After a few seconds the familiar feelings came and he was surrounded by darkness. When the darkness cleared he found himself not in his room but in a circular room with a glass dome. The walls were metallic-looking, and seemed to give off a soft light of their own. He was seated on a chair made of the same metal, and directly in front of him was a kind of dais, where a large tubular object about eight feet in diameter was mounted on the wall. He

looked for a door, but the walls seemed smooth and unbroken all the way round. He found whilst he could move his arms and head, he could not raise himself to a standing position.

Suddenly he was thrown into darkness. A bluish glow appeared on the dais directly above the tubular object, a wall panel slid open out of nowhere, and a figure stepped forward onto the dais. The figure began speaking to him, although his lips did not move. The figure welcomed Bender to 'our domain', and warned him that he was about to see things which he would not be able to believe. The figure made a motion with his hand, and the tubular object came to life, looking in some ways like a television screen.

A spectacular view appeared, looking somehow three-dimensional. The figure said this was his people's home, a planet which was part of a system formed from an immense 'central source' at the heart of the universe. He told of how on his planet there was only one race, unlike on Earth where there were many races which often waged war upon each other, which would ultimately lead to the destruction of the Earth. He then began to tell of the purpose of his race's visit to Earth.

He said that they had been taking a 'valuable chemical' from the Earth's seas, a chemical vital to the existence of his race. He added that the extraction process left a 'sticky residue' which in the past had been discharged from saucers over land [*'Angel Hair'? - Auth.*], but that now they were 'more cautious' and only discharged the residue over the sea. He motioned with his hand again, and the display changed to show the Pentagon, Washington DC. He added that his race had people stationed in the Pentagon, 'to keep us informed of all that is taking place'.

The view then changed again to show a nuclear weapon stockpile in the USA.

Similar stockpiles in other countries, including the Soviet Union, were then shown. He said that 'with the push of a button' they could detonate all the nuclear weapons on Earth. The question of why they would want to do that formed in Bender's mind. The reply came that they would only do it if they 'were discovered and you tried to stop us'. He added that they had nothing to fear from the Earth people though, that their weapons were 'far superior to anything you have'.

A hideous monster then appeared on the display, which made Bender shudder with repugnance. He noticed that the figure had disappeared from the dais, but his voice continued, as if from the monster itself. The voice explained that the 'monster' was the true appearance of a member of his race. He added that the appearance of Earth people would change over the coming millions of years, and that man's nuclear experiments could have an effect on the appearance of future generations.

He explained that on his planet there were males, females, and others which were neither male nor female. These 'others' were rare, and were 'exalted ones' who became their rulers. His race controlled its population by storing the eggs from its females and only allowing them to hatch when 'the great blackness covers our planet, and takes many lives'. At this point the figure walked back through the opening in the wall, which closed behind him. After more unpleasant sensations, Bender found himself back in his room, lying on his bed.

He locked the piece of metal away again in his strongbox. He felt an overwhelming desire to tell someone about his experiences, but was afraid he would be labelled a crackpot. After agonising for several minutes, he telephoned a close friend, asking him to come around to discuss something which he couldn't talk about over the telephone. His friend

reacted disdainfully and refused to come round, telling him to 'stop having those pipe dreams so he could get publicity for the IFSB!'. He hung up, leaving Bender with a sinking feeling. If he couldn't confide in his best friend, what was he to do?

Fantasy and Paranoia?

Bender was by now beginning to assume a kind of uneasy familiarity with his 'visitors', and started to hope that the next contact would be soon. At this point he decided that he must settle the question of his relationship with the IFSB and its committee members, and he decided to do so by telling them only **part** of (what he saw as) the truth.

He decided to tell the committee that he had been visited by 'certain individuals whom he could not name', who had revealed to him much of the 'truth' behind the flying saucers, and who had warned him to cease his flying saucer research. He would say that the mystery men had shown 'credentials', hoping that this would cause the committee to attach an 'earthly' label to his visitors.

He decided to say that publication of his new knowledge was being withheld by a 'higher source', and that he would discontinue publishing *Space Review*, at least in its present form. Why go on publishing a 'research journal' if he already knew the answer to the mystery? Bender revealed his intentions at the next meeting of the IFSB committee, whose members seemed to accept his decisions.

Bender's next 'visitation' came in August, 1953. He was in his room when he thought he heard a floorboard squeak from just the other side of the door. He also detected a whiff of sulphur. When he opened the door, there stood one of the men in black! His two companions were just behind him, and all three of them walked into his room!

Bender's heart was pounding. This was new - the men were in his room, risking being seen by someone else, and he had never seen them at such close quarters before. He was able to see that they were dressed totally in black, even black shirts [not white like with later MIBs - Auth.]

The nearest figure 'spoke' to Bender, saying they were going to take him to their base on Earth. They formed a circle with him, touching him for the first time. He began to feel numb and faint. When he 'came to' he found himself in an immense cavern, which he was later told was in Antarctica.

Bender goes on to describe something akin to a secret underground base which fills the final scenes in a James Bond movie. Vast laboratories with rows of unfamiliar looking machinery; monorails leading from one cavern to another, which he and his escorts took a ride on; a vast flying saucer 'hangar', with saucers coming and going, discharging loads of seawater for processing. (Bender later sketched this part of his 'vision', showing 'landing towers' for the saucers. He sent this to Gray Barker, who used it as the cover illustration for the November, 1953 issue of the *Saucerian*.)

Bender was shown the seawater processing area, but only briefly. No information was forthcoming on the process itself, which he sensed was something which was not to be discussed. He and his escorts then moved to an auditorium of sorts, with seats and a kind of viewing screen. They sat down and a figure entered, nine-feet tall and dressed in a gold uniform. He gathered that this figure, who was almost human in appearance, was one of the 'exalted ones', who was in charge of the whole operation.

With glowing eyes, the man looked at Bender and began to 'speak' to him. The man welcomed him to his people's base of operations, saying that he was trusted, and

had been chosen to visit the base and learn about their operations on Earth. He invited Bender to ask him any questions he wanted, although he said he could not guarantee to answer all of them. In response to Bender's questioning, the man said that they had been on Earth since 1945, and that they planned to stay another 15 years.

Many other questions and answers followed, and Bender was slightly unnerved to learn that while the alien race was not overtly hostile to Earth, they told him that they had 'found it necessary' to kill Earth people on some occasions, and that it could be 'necessary' to deal with him in the same way if he became an 'obstacle' to them. He asked many general questions on science, medicine and religion, all of which received answers. When asked about cancer, he was told that the increasing use of motor vehicles was a major factor, but that a cure for cancer would eventually be found.

He was shown scenes on the home planet of the aliens, including one scene of 'shooting practice' with large guns being used to shoot 'fireballs' at targets. When Bender asked for some physical proof to be provided to the world of the aliens' presence, he was told that a small saucer would come soon and shoot one of the fireballs 'through something of little value' near Bender's home, something that anyone could see. Suddenly the 'exalted one' left and he knew the interview was over. Soon, after the usual procedures and unpleasantness, he found himself back in his bedroom.

The promised 'proof' was not long in coming. On 20 August the local paper carried the following headline:

MYSTERY BLAST SHATTERS SIGN
IN NEW HAVEN, CONN. ORIGIN
BAFFLES POLICE

The Last Days of the IFSB

(Much of Bender's account from this point has already been given earlier in this article, as reported by Gray Barker, and is not repeated in detail here.)

The hole in the signboard was investigated by 'Augie' Roberts, an IFSB investigator. He noticed a residue around the hole which did not seem to be part of the sign itself. He removed the residue and sent it away to be analysed. Roberts interviewed a lady witness, who lived near the sign, who said she had seen a streak of light followed by a loud bang the night before the hole was discovered. She also remembered smelling a sulphurous odour. The analysis of the residue showed it to be mainly copper and copper oxide, both common Earthly substances, although foreign to the sign itself.

Around this time, Roberts and Dom Lucchesi were growing increasingly concerned and suspicious about what was happening to the IFSB, and eventually they persuaded Bender to let them interview him. This they did after a false start due to a car breakdown. They later recalled that Bender started and went as white as a sheet when they asked him a question which included the word 'Antarctica', although at the time they had no idea of the significance of this.

What Roberts and Lucchesi didn't know was that the day before they came to see Bender, he had received another visit from the three men, who issued dire warnings about what would happen to Bender and his friends if he gave anything away during the interview. (See page 2 for details of the interview.)

Shortly after Roberts and Lucchesi had left, Bender had his most horrifying encounter so far. He felt that someone was still in the room watching him. The hairs on the back of his neck stood up when he

noticed that there was a depression in one of the easy chairs, as if someone was sitting there. Then the depression levelled out, as if that someone had just got up! Suddenly he felt an icy hand on his shoulder. Slowly turning round, he had the worst fright of his life when he faced a loathsome, greenish creature, ten feet tall with glowing red eyes. He fainted. When he came to he noticed that the rug where the creature had stood was scorched, and the familiar smell of sulphur was there once more.

Other saucer research groups around the World were beginning to react to the IFSB's closure. Bender cites the fledgling British Flying Saucer Bureau (BFSB) as giving him the kindest and most patient reaction. They, like Barker, thought that Bender must have been 'silenced' by genuine secret service agents. The BFSB itself had no visits from MIBs nor any threatening telephone calls, but they did take the precaution of contacting (via one of its members, who had 'contacts') MI6, asking if it was 'safe' for the BFSB to continue its activities. MI6 gave them the 'all clear'.

Edgar Jarrold of the Australian Flying Saucer Bureau exchanged a number of letters with Bender, one of which did mention a 'visitor' (see page 4). Jarrold's last letter to Bender (20 April 1955) was a badly scribbled note which included the sentence 'I am labouring under almost impossible obstacles'. Six years later an (unsubstantiated) report reached Bender from one Martin Elsworthy in England, stating that Jarrold later had a serious accident when he was seen, in broad daylight, to be pushed down a flight of stairs in a Sydney department store – but there was nobody there to do the pushing! This 'accident' so unnerved Jarrold that he ceased his saucer investigations.

Around this time the *Bridgeport Sunday Herald* got hold of Bender's story, leaked

to them by a former IFSB council member. Bender was stunned by the article, which he saw as making him look ridiculous. The remaining IFSB council members resigned, he was subjected to a day of ridicule and persecution from his workmates, and at home his telephone never stopped ringing.

Women in White

Bender had what proved to be his final visit shortly after the newspaper article appeared. The painful sensations and the sulphurous odour came again, and the three men appeared in the centre of his room. Once again they circled him, and after more unpleasant sensations he found himself alone in the room with the glass dome.

A wall panel opened and he was amazed to see three beautiful women, dressed in tight white uniforms, emerge and approach him. Like their male counterparts, they stared at him with glowing eyes, and the pain above his eyes became almost unbearable. He became paralysed; they picked him up and carried him to another room, and laid him down on something which looked like an operating table. They then began to remove his clothing until he was naked!

To Bender's intense relief his captors did not start to wield the scalpel, but poured a liquid of some kind over him, which they proceeded to massage into *every part* of his body, turning him onto his stomach and onto his sides in the process. A device of some kind then came down from the ceiling directly over him, and strongly illuminated him for several minutes. The pain above his eyes vanished, and he found himself able to move again.

Raising himself, he found himself facing a sinister cowed figure, who pushed him back down. The figure told him not to fear, and revealed that the 'treatment' he had just received was a 'preventative', which

would ensure that he would never suffer from the 'dreaded disease' feared by all people on Earth. The figure departed, and through the wall panel walked the 'exalted one'. The exalted one told him that the 'ray' which had bathed his body a few minutes ago had placed a 'marker' on him which would enable him to be kept under constant surveillance, and which could be used to 'destroy his body' if at any time he revealed their secret!

The figure told Bender that he would not be visited again, but if he wished to contact them he only had to rub the metal disc. He also said that their mission on Earth was at an 'advanced stage', and that when they left Earth the metal disc would disappear. With a final warning that he would be subjected to 'unbearable headaches' if he even *thought* about revealing their secret, the figure departed.

Bender is Freed

In April 1956 Gray Barker's *They Knew Too Much About Flying Saucers* was published. The greater part of this book was about Bender's experiences, as Barker saw them, and it resulted in more unwelcome publicity for Bender and his new English wife Betty. Although he had had not been 'visited' for some time, the metal disc was still in the strongbox and he often experienced excruciating headaches. In August 1957 he flew to England with Betty, where he met Edgar Plunkett, president of the British Flying Saucer Bureau (BFSB).

(Edgar Plunkett died in 1993, but his son Denis, now retired, runs the BFSB, which is Britain's oldest UFO group and still very much a going concern. – Auth.)

Barker had for some time been urging Bender to write a book himself, which he finally started during the Christmas holiday of 1958. He typed the first four pages, but then the old familiar smell of

sulphur came into his nostrils and throbbing pain over his eyes started again. No visitors appeared, but the telephone rang. It was not a normal call because he could still hear the dial tone, but over it a voice said 'Stop whatever you are writing at once, before we find it necessary to carry out orders.' There was a click and the voice stopped, as did his headache.

He went back to where he had left the typed sheets, to find them gone! At this Bender decided to write to Barker and tell him that the time was not yet right for him to tell his story. He was still bothered by headaches and pains over his eyes until one day in late 1960 when he smelt the sulphurous odour again, coming from the box where the metal disc was. He opened the box – and the disc was gone! The box was full of powdery dust, as if everything else in the box had disintegrated. He was ecstatic, and decided to write to Barker straight away to tell him that at last he was ready to tell his story.

Although Bender received no more 'visits', he was still plagued by headaches and pains over his eyes, which thorough medical checks and tests failed to diagnose. A final article in the *Sunday Herald* lost him the last friends he had of those who served in the IFSB, excepting Gray Barker, who published Bender's book *Flying Saucers and the Three Men* in 1962. Whilst Barker didn't believe in the literal truth of Bender's tales of Men In Black and saucer bases in Antarctica, he believed that Bender was being sincere in his belief that the things he described had actually happened.

Assessment

Discussion of Bender's tale must address the following alternatives:

- Was he making the whole thing up, from start to finish?
- Was he suffering from a condition which made him *think* some external forces were at work, the effects of which he was sincerely reporting?
- Was his story literally true?
- Could we be looking at some combination of the above?

Was he making it all up? This seems unlikely – what would be his motive for this, what was he hoping to gain? When his reasons for closing the IFSB began to leak out he was subjected to ridicule and vilification, and one by one lost even his closest friends.

Another factor mitigates against this alternative. Following his first encounter with an MIB in the cinema in Bridgeport, he *told* the cinema manager about the strange man and he later *told* a policeman about the other encounter he had on his way home. These encounters happened in November 1952. Bender's book, where he first tells of them, appeared in 1962. Ten years is not too long a time for these people still to be traceable by a diligent investigator – they could probably confirm (or not) Bender's claim. Of course, Bender could have co-opted *them* into an elaborate, multi-year hoax, but credibility is being left far behind now.

So was Bender suffering from some kind of psychiatric condition? Prior to his all-consuming interest in UFOs, Bender had a strong interest in other paranormal phenomena, chiefly ghosts and 'black magic'. He once spent eight months painting on his bedroom wall images of the supernatural characters he had read about in the books of Mary Shelley, Bram

Stoker, Edgar Allan Poe, Edgar Rice Burroughs and others. John Keel in *Operation Trojan Horse* makes much of this possible connection, pointing out that Bender appeared to suffer from all of the classic symptoms of 'demonomania'²: the fierce headaches, the upset stomach, anorexia and lacunar amnesia.

Paranoid schizophrenia is another candidate. This is a condition characterised by symptoms which include delusions, hallucinations (which can be olfactory as well as visual, auditory and tactile), and feelings of self-importance (the IFSB had a small membership despite its rather grandiose title, its 'International Headquarters' being Bender's 'den'; and *Space Review* reached no more than a few hundred readers.)

Bender was undoubtedly suffering from *something*. When, long after he stopped seeing the 'visitors', he was still plagued by the excruciating headaches and pain above his eyes. He saw his doctor and had tests in hospital to try to determine the cause of his discomfort, but all the tests proved negative, and all the pain killers his doctor gave him proved ineffective. Again, his reporting of these pains could have been part of an elaborate hoax, or the *reporting* itself could have been part of a more serious condition, but these alternatives do not seem likely.

There was, of course, not a shred of physical evidence to support Bender's claims. No-one else ever saw the MIBs, no-one else ever smelt the sulphurous odour and the metal disc conveniently disappeared.

Could Bender's story possibly have been true? The stories of Antarctic bases, long a favourite theory amongst some ufologists, has no evidence to support it.

Clearly, the Men In Black themselves cannot be dismissed so lightly, as there have been scores of such reports since Bender's, which persist to this day. Bender's men were unusual though in that for the most part they *materialised* into his vision rather than appearing in a more conventional fashion, such as knocking on his front door and walking in. He also reports them as having *black* shirts, as opposed to the white shirts which appear in almost all other reports.

Believable or not, Bender's story provides an archetype for Men In Black, although curiously the Maury Island case six years earlier may have served as a prototype for Bender's story – even though the Maury Island incident was eventually shown to be a hoax.

Other imagery was available for Bender to use for his story (which of course was not published until 1962). Besides the first Men In Black of 1947 we have:

- The 'sticky residue' which was discharged by the saucers – two well known cases of 'angel hair' were reported from Oloron and Gaillac in France in 1952.
- Saucer interiors – the smooth, unbroken walls, giving off their own light, seamless wall panels, the 'operating table'. George Adamski and other 'contactees' were reporting similar imagery in the early 1950s, preceded by scenes in the film *The Day The Earth Stood Still*, released in 1951.
- The beautiful female 'aliens', the smearing of his naked body with some kind of thick fluid - Antonio Villas Boas had already had a very similar experience in Brazil (occurred 1957, reported 1959).

Could there be an 'Earthly' explanation? Michael Swords writing in *International UFO Reporter*, 1992, reports that shortly

² I have been unable to find a dictionary definition of this term - Auth.

after Augie Roberts found the 'New Haven Fireball' fragments, a team from the **US Naval Ordnance** arrived to inspect the signboard.

Swords reasons that the Navy presence indicated that a shell or missile had holed the billboard, rather than a UFO, and the military were less than impressed that a civilian saucer researcher had got there first and made off with the evidence. Swords believes that Navy intelligence agents 'decided to tell Bender something so scary that he would never peep anything but nonsense about saucers again', and suspects that the Bender affair was 'an intelligence game or experiment to see how effectively operatives could manipulate the fledgling UFO "research" community.'

The **Robertson Panel** was a distinguished panel of non-military scientists - put together in January 1953 to review the available evidence on UFOs and to consider the possible dangers of the phenomena to US national security. Reporting at the height of the McCarthyism era, the panel also recommended that private UFO groups be monitored for subversive activities, the 'monitoring' to be done by the CIA.

Bender disbanded IFSB in September 1953. So, could the CIA have got at Bender, who invented the Men In Black as a cover story?

Two final points of interest concern the MIB connections of Jarrold, Fulton and Moseley which are hinted at in Barker's and Bender's books, also a major inconsistency between what Bender was saying was happening to him in 1953, and what he reported in his book, published in 1962.

Australian researcher Keith Basterfield has firm evidence that Jarrold's 'mysterious visitor' was someone who was known to

him, and that Jarrold ceased his research due to personal difficulties; there was no MIB connection. As regards Harold Fulton, Fulton states in a personal communication between himself and Basterfield that he (Fulton) is '... aware of course that my name has been associated with this aspect of the phenomenon in a number of books; but I would like to assure you in all honesty, I swear, I have never been visited by those so called unsavoury characters.'

Jim Moseley writes to say that 'In regard to my own experiences with Men In Black, or being 'hushed up', unfortunately the true answer is very prosaic - I have never had anything happen to me in all these years [43 - *Auth.*] in the UFO field that was threatening in any way - no telephone taps that I know of, no mysterious visits, etc. I say this in spite of whatever may appear to the contrary, in Barker's book, in the early issues of *Saucer News*, or elsewhere.'

Most accounts of Bender's experiences refer to a 'thesis' that Bender had about flying saucers, that he had forwarded this thesis to 'a friend', and that the Men In Black came to him the day after he posted it, returning the thesis to him and ordering him never to reveal it. Some speculate that this 'friend' lived in Washington DC, or that the friend was Jarrold, in Australia. In his book, Bender *makes no explicit reference to a thesis, and no reference at all to a 'thesis', or anything similar, coming into the possession of the three men.* Bender *does* claim that:

- Following 'C-Day' ('Contact Day') on 15 March 1953, when Bender and other members of the IFSB tried to establish telepathic contact with the 'saucer people', he received his first 'contact', with threats, from 'the visitors', although they did not appear on this occasion. Bender wrote down a description of this first visit, 'sealed it

in an envelope and locked it in [his] desk'.

- Four months later, in July 1953, we find that Bender again writes up his experiences of C-Day, 'with the intention of mailing it to some official in Washington DC . . .'. Note the use of the word 'intention' here, and the use of the words 'some official' - no one is named. Note also that these accounts refer only to C-Day, not to any saucer theories. In any case, Bender later claims that the second account mysteriously vanished from the strongbox where he had placed it. He makes no further mention of the first account.

The only tantalising clue to what might have been a thesis comes in a letter from Jarrold to Bender, dated 14 October 1954, which includes the paragraph: 'Last night I went through past letters from you, and in one of them found the first clue in the name of the man to whom you submitted your thesis. You will remember that you forwarded the names of two Americans to whom it would be interesting to write.'

So, a story, the ravings of a sick Albert Bender, or the truth? I leave the reader with this from author Mark Twain:

'Fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities. Truth isn't.'

Other Classic MIB Cases

The Hopkins Case

One of the most noteworthy MIB cases on record was that centred around Dr Herbert Hopkins, and his daughter-in-law, in 1976.

Dr Hopkins, 58, was a medical doctor and a hypnotist. In 1976 he was helping investigate an alleged UFO close encounter case in Maine, USA. On the evening of 11 September, when he was alone in his house, a man telephoned. The caller identified himself as vice-president of the New Jersey UFO Research Organisation and requested that he might visit Dr Hopkins later that night to discuss the case, to which Dr Hopkins agreed.

He immediately went to the back door to switch on the outside light for when his visitor arrived. Before he could switch on the light, Dr Hopkins saw his visitor already climbing the porch steps. Dr Hopkins later said that 'I saw no car, and even if he did have a car, he could not possibly have gotten to my house that quickly from *any* phone.' [*No mobile phones in 1976 - Auth.*]

At the time [Italics mine - Auth.] Dr Hopkins felt no particular surprise as he admitted his visitor, who was dressed totally in black, apart from a white shirt. His clothes were immaculate, seemingly brand new with sharp creases. When the visitor took off his (black) hat he revealed himself to be completely hairless, being not only bald but having no eyebrows or eyelashes. His skin was deathly white, his lips bright red. During the course of their subsequent conversation Dr Hopkins was astonished to notice that, as the stranger brushed his lips with his gloves, his lips took on a smeared appearance and his gloves became stained with lipstick!

When Dr Hopkins had finished relating his account of the case, his visitor told him that his host had two coins in his pocket. Dr Hopkins felt in his pocket, and this was indeed the case. The man asked him to give him one of the coins, which he did. He began stroking the coin, which seemed to Dr Hopkins to go out of focus before vanishing. 'Neither you nor anyone else on this plane will ever see that coin again', the visitor told him. [*Note plane, not planet - Auth.*]

After talking for a while longer about UFOs, Dr Hopkins noticed that his visitor's speech was slowing down. The man rose falteringly to his feet and said, very slowly, 'My energy is running low – must go now – goodbye.' He walked unsteadily to the door and went out, going uncertainly down the porch steps, one at a time. Looking out, he noticed a very bright, bluish light in the drive, which he assumed was from the stranger's car, although he could neither hear nor see a car.

When his family returned, they and Dr Hopkins examined the drive and found marks, but in the *centre* of the drive, where a car's tyres could not have been. By the next day, although the drive had remained undisturbed in the meantime, the marks had disappeared.

Dr Hopkins was by now feeling very disturbed about last night's events, especially when he recalled his visitor's bizarre behaviour and actions. He was afraid, and erased the tapes of the hypnotic sessions he had been conducting, as his visitor had told him to do. He refused to have anything more to do with the Maine case.

The case (at Tripp Pond, Androscoggin County, Maine) had occurred almost a year earlier, on 27 October 1975. David Stephens, 21, and his friend 'Paul', 18, had a UFO close encounter, which included a

period of missing time. The morning after the encounter, a stranger visited Stephens at the trailer which he shared with 'Paul'. The man was stocky, had a crew-cut, and wore dark glasses and a dark suit. He asked Stephens to confirm that he had seen a UFO, then said 'You had better keep your mouth shut if you know what's good for you', then quickly left.

But the Hopkins MIB saga does not end there. A few days after Dr Hopkins had received his visit from an MIB, his daughter-in-law Maureen received a telephone call from a man who said he knew her husband (Dr Hopkins's son, John), and who asked if he and a companion could come and visit them.

John met the man and his companion, a woman, at a fast-food restaurant nearby and brought them home. Both appeared to be in their mid-thirties, but wore curiously old-fashioned clothes, and both looked somewhat odd. The woman's breasts were set very low, and there seemed to be something wrong with the way her legs were joined to her hips. Both walked strangely, taking short steps and leaning forward as if afraid of falling.

The two sat down on a sofa at John's house, accepting drinks but never tasting them. The man asked John and Maureen a number of odd and personal questions. 'Did they watch television much?', 'What did they read?', 'What did they talk about?' All the time he was talking, the man was fondling his female companion – and he asked John if this was all right and if he was doing it correctly! When John left the room, the man asked Maureen 'how she was made' and if she had any nude photographs of herself.

Soon after, the woman stood up and said she wanted to leave. The man then stood up, but made no move to go. The man stood directly in line between the door and the woman, who seemed to be incapable of

walking around him. After a pause the woman asked John 'Please move him, I can't move him myself.' At this point the man suddenly left followed by the woman, both walking in straight lines. Neither of them said goodbye.

Assessment

It seems extremely unlikely that Dr Hopkins had made up the whole thing (he was a successful, well respected doctor) or that he had simply had a hallucination (the marks on the drive, which his wife and children saw when they came home, were real).

It seems that the events described were real, but the identity of the visitor remains a mystery. There was never any such thing as the 'New Jersey UFO Research Organisation'.

MIBs in Mexico

Carlos de los Santos Montiel was flying his light aircraft near Mexico City in May 1975, when he had an encounter which was to become Mexico's best-documented UFO case. Suddenly his plane started to shake for no apparent reason. Looking to his right, he saw a dark grey disc-shaped object, 10–12 feet in diameter, just beyond the right wingtip. Looking to his left he saw a similar object near the left wingtip. To his horror, he then saw a third object coming at him head-on!

The object passed just beneath Carlos's plane, grazing the fuselage. He found that his plane's controls would no longer respond, but that he was still flying relatively smoothly. Sick with fear now, he described his encounter, in a trembling voice, to the Mexico City airport control tower. By now the objects had disappeared, and he was relieved to find that the controls and instruments were working again as he brought the plane in to land at the airport.

The control tower staff, who had tracked the plane and the objects on radar, took Carlos's report very seriously. He was given a medical examination, and was pronounced none the worse for wear, physically and psychologically, after his experience. His encounter received, much to his embarrassment, a lot of publicity. It was only with some reluctance that he agreed to appear on a TV show, hosted by ufologist and TV personality Pedro Ferriz, to talk about his experience. Little did he know that his bizarre experience was to become even more bizarre.

Two weeks later, driving to the television studio, Carlos noticed a large, black Ford Galaxy limousine pull in front of him. Looking in his rear-view mirror, he noticed another car of the same type just behind him. Both cars looked brand new, as if they had just been driven out of the showroom. The cars crowded him, forcing him to pull over and stop. He was about to get out when he realised that the other two cars had also stopped, disgorging four tall, broad-shouldered men, who were walking towards him.

The men were 'Scandinavian' in appearance, with very pale skin and wearing black suits. One of them walked up to Carlos's car door, standing with his hand on it, preventing Carlos from getting out. Speaking quickly in Spanish, with a strange 'mechanical' tone, the man said 'Look boy, if you value your life and your family's too, don't talk any more about this sighting of yours.' Stunned speechless, Carlos turned his car around and drove home; he never made it to the television studio that day.

Carlos described his experience to Pedro Ferriz two days later who (interestingly) said that he had heard similar stories from UFO witnesses before, assuring Carlos that nothing would happen to him. Carlos agreed to another TV interview, which passed off without incident.

Two months later, Dr J. Allen Hynek (*died 1986, regarded by many to be one of the key figures in UFO research*) was travelling through Mexico and, having heard about the de los Santos case, invited Carlos to his hotel to discuss his experience. Carlos went to Dr Hynek's hotel after having gone for an interview with Mexicana Airlines, with whom he had applied for a job as a pilot.

Walking up the hotel steps, Carlos was shocked to meet one of the strange men who had threatened him before. 'You were already warned once', the stranger said, 'You are not to talk about your experience.' Carlos protested his innocence, saying that he was only responding to an invitation from Dr Hynek. At this the stranger pushed him sharply back several feet. 'Look, I don't want you to make problems for yourself', he said, 'And why did you leave your house at six this morning? Do you work for Mexicana Airlines? Get out of here - and don't come back!'

Carlos did as he was told.

This proved to be Carlos's last encounter with the strangers. Two years later, when talking to UFO researcher Jerome Clark and his friend Richard Heiden, he recalled 'They were strange. They were huge, taller than Mexicans are, and they were so *white*. But the strangest thing of all is that all the while they were in my presence *I never saw them blink*.'

Assessment

In many ways a 'typical' MIB case – the black clothes, the large black cars, the mechanical speech, the threats to the witness (never carried out). No dark skin here though, pale white (a feature of other MIB cases).

Whilst his UFO encounter had the physical evidence of damage to his plane and several witnesses to the objects being tracked on radar, the MIB story rests solely

on the word of de los Santos himself. Researcher Jerome Clark felt that de los Santos presented his story in a simple, straightforward, unsensational way, and he felt that he was being sincere.

UK Cases

Although it is a widely held belief that MIB cases hardly ever occur anywhere except the United States, the UK (and other countries) have had their fair share of MIBs.

MIBs at the Convent

At the time of the incidents in 1980, Maria Korn was a 14 year-old boarder at the Convent of Jesus and Mary in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire. Whilst at the convent Maria was receiving psychological counselling from a Dr Black for acute anorexia and sleeping difficulties.

One night Maria couldn't sleep and got up, at about 1 am, to look at the stars. She stood by the window overlooking the tennis court and she was surprised to see a large, ball-shaped flashing light inside the tennis court itself, which was completely surrounded by wire netting. She looked at it for about five minutes, then turned away. When she looked again at about 1.30 am the object had gone, but she heard a strange 'whirling' sound and, looking up, she saw the object again just above the window, but there were no lights on it this time. The object then moved off rapidly.

The next morning, none of the other girls mentioned having seen anything strange during the night, and Maria kept her experience to herself. Later that morning she was playing tennis when she slipped and fell – and was surprised to see a large (45 feet in diameter), shallow, circular depression seemingly burnt onto the tennis court, exactly where she had seen the object the night before. The next day the police arrived to inspect the damage. Still

Maria didn't tell anyone of what she had seen two nights before; she was afraid she would be ridiculed and expelled from the convent.

The Visitors Arrive . . .

Three or four months later Maria was in a maths class when one of the nuns, Sister Jennifer, interrupted the class and took her out, saying that she had a visitor. Maria thought at the time that it was unusual for the class to be interrupted, visitors normally came only at weekends, and she was worried in case the 'visitor' was bringing bad news. Sister Jennifer showed her into a dining room where, sitting at a large table, was not one visitor but two, two men dressed in black. The fire was on and the room felt warm as Maria entered it, but as soon as she saw the two men she felt cold, and she put on the jacket that she was carrying.

Maria had never seen her visitors before, and she asked them who they were. They told her they were to do with Dr Black, her psychiatrist. She stared at their eyes, which weren't brown or blue, but a strange brownish greyish colour. She found the experience uncomfortable, and looked away.

The men asked her how she was and how she was doing at school, just a normal, polite conversation. As they talked Maria noticed several other strange things about her visitors:

- they looked the same, as if they were identical twins
- their skin was smooth and featureless, no beard or 'shadow', no sign that they ever needed to shave at all
- their hair was shiny black, each brushed in the same style and not a hair out of place

- their black suits, seemingly brand new, fitted perfectly as if tailor-made, and having razor-sharp creases
- their tie and socks were also black, exactly the same black as their trousers and jackets.

One of the men then asked Maria if anything strange had happened at the convent recently. She instantly thought that they must mean what she had seen at the tennis court, and so not wanting to admit what she knew to the strangers she said 'No'. 'Are you sure?' he then said, to which she replied 'Yes', but she knew that the man knew she was lying.

Just then the school lunchtime bell went. The man asked what the bell was for, then told Maria she had better go to lunch, adding that they had better be off. Although the men appeared to be like 'businessmen' they didn't appear to be wearing watches as one of them asked Maria the time. The men had been drinking coffee during their talk with Maria, but when she shook hands with them as she was saying goodbye she noticed that their hands were ice cold, as if they hadn't been holding cups of hot coffee at all.

... And Leave

One of the men asked Sister Jennifer if Maria could show them the way out, saying finally that 'we'll be back to see you again'. She walked to the doorway and was amazed to see that the two men were walking (and swinging their arms) *exactly in step with each other* [*italics mine, Auth.*] as if there was only one mind controlling them both. They walked outside to their waiting (black) car, Maria noticing as they did so that, although it was a windy day, their hair didn't move, as if it was glued down.

The car had a chauffeur, also dressed in black, who must have been waiting all this time. As the car moved off Maria noticed

that the number plate had white characters on a black background, which she thought strange. It also had mirror windows; Maria couldn't see through the windows into the car, but she thought that the men could see out. She caught a glimpse into the car when one of the men opened a door, but all she could see was *black*, no seats, nothing.

The car moved off *with no sound at all* [*Italics mine, Auth.*]; no sound of an engine, no sound of an engine being started, no exhaust fumes. She was also mystified that although she saw the car turn out of the convent gate, she didn't see it moving up the hill that lead to the convent. (Traffic was temporarily hidden by the convent wall before it turned up the hill, which was the only way in or out.)

Maria stood where she was for several minutes, unable to move. She could hear Sister Jennifer calling to her, but she couldn't turn around and go to her. Sister Jennifer asked her if she was alright, at which point she 'snapped out of it' and was able to move again. She asked Maria who the men were and Maria replied, saying that they were from Dr Black, although they were both surprised that Dr Black hadn't warned them that the men would be coming. When, a few weeks later, Maria saw Dr Black, she asked her about her visitors. Dr Black said she hadn't sent the men, and would never send anyone without informing Maria first.

Aftermath

Although the men in black had said they would come and see Maria again, they never did, at least not 'in the flesh'. She sometimes had vivid dreams where she would see them and would say to them 'This is a dream, I'm not really seeing you', to which one of them replied 'Yes you are.' Years later, after she had left the convent, she saw the black *silhouette* of a man standing on a window ledge outside her bedroom, a ledge so narrow that only a baby could have stood there.

Although Maria never saw her MIBs again, she did begin to develop extraordinary abilities and have extraordinary experiences. Whilst still at the convent she:

- bent a spoon, Uri Geller style
- timed herself swimming under water for 5 minutes before surfacing
- had an out-of-body experience
- experienced an upsurge in her creative and academic abilities – tested and verified by Dr Black.

Most amazingly of all, she also claimed that on one occasion, at night, she went out into the convent yard and began to *fly*. This was witnessed by several other girls, who ran around trying to catch her when she flew low enough!

After Maria left the convent her strange experiences and abilities continued. She:

- found that she could make light bulbs burn out
- had vivid dreams of being inside a UFO
- started a ‘dead’ car engine (with a jammed starter motor and a totally flat battery) just by willing it to start
- turned red traffic lights to green, repeatedly, even after they had only just changed to red
- had several UFO sightings including one, witnessed by several other girls, which was so large and so close it ‘completely filled’ the window of the office where she was working
- accurately predicted when a friend would become pregnant, and when she would marry
- dreamed that she had been stabbed in the arm – and woke to find a wound in

her arm, with her arm and night-dress covered in blood.

Assessment

Maria was born in Spain, an orphaned Romany child, adopted and brought to the UK when she was five years old. After she moved to the UK, she was unable to speak until she was seven years old, and then she started speaking in Spanish, her first language, before rapidly learning English. Her ‘dumb’ period could be a symptom of the early-life trauma of being jerked from her life in Spain to a very different life in England.

Whilst at the convent, particularly at the time of her ‘experiences’, she was suffering from serious anorexia, also from insomnia. She also experienced ‘lucid dreams’. Whilst these could account for some of her experiences, it would perhaps stretch credulity too far to suppose that this lucidity could be shared with others, although this could be an explanation for why some of Maria’s dormitory companions reported that they could actually see her flying through the air.

Many of the things that happened to Maria were witnessed by others and were undoubtedly ‘real’. Her UFO left a depression and burn marks on the ground which was there for all to see; her MIBs were seen by other people and they drank their coffee (unlike some MIBs who don’t touch their drinks!); her spoon bending, the increase in her academic and artistic abilities, light-bulb popping, UFO sightings and other events were all witnessed by others.

A Man In Black does his Shopping

All sketches used in this section drawn by and used with the kind permission of the witness

One morning in the autumn of 1977, at her home town near Portsmouth, Hampshire, Mrs Evans (pseudonym) visited the local grocer's shop. In the shop she saw a tall man, dressed in black. He was ahead of her, so she stood back to wait until he was served.

She hadn't taken too much notice of him, but while he was being handed his change (about which he was seemingly unconcerned), she noticed that his gaze was fixed upon her. She found this unnerving; he looked at her as if he *knew* her, as if he had been *expecting* her. He then left the shop, and she had forgotten about him by the time it was her turn to be served.

When she left the shop, Mrs Evans noticed that the man was standing nearby, as if waiting for someone. As she started to walk, he began walking also, keeping five or six paces ahead of her. As she watched him she began to form the impression that he was 'unusual', although she couldn't put her finger on quite why.

Mrs Evans was half-way home (with the man seemingly taking the same route) when he turned left into a side road. As she crossed the road, she looked to her left out of curiosity.

He was standing in the middle of the road, facing her now, and their eyes met once more. He nodded three times, without any change in his facial expression, not even a slight smile. His gaze was intense and

penetrating. Then, to Mrs Evans's utter amazement, he vanished without moving from the spot, 'like someone turning out a light'.

Thoroughly unnerved by now, she hurried home.

Mrs Evans recalled several strange things about the man (she is an accomplished painter and has an eye for detail):

- his clothes looked brand new, as though they had only just been bought
- he was dressed from head to foot in black (except for his white shirt)
- his skin was albino-type white, as was his hair, which was wispy
- his eyes were jet, glittering black



- he appeared to be in his early 50s, but there were no wrinkles on his skin, and no sign of any facial hair or stubble
- he had unusually broad shoulders and a narrow waist
- he walked bolt upright with a 'stiff' gait
- there seemed to be no natural curve to his spine, which was seemingly dead straight.

This was Mrs Evans's only sighting of an MIB - or was it?

Other strange men

As a young woman in the early 1960s, Mrs Evans was walking to work one day when she noticed a man walking alongside her. She didn't know who he was, nor did her workmates. She never saw where he came from, or where he went to. He asked her many questions, saying about himself only that he was a former pilot, grounded because of a heart condition.

The man accompanied her every day for about a week and a half, then she never saw him again.

Mrs Evans next saw a 'strange man' in 1979, over a year after her original MIB encounter. In her kitchen one day, she became aware that there was a figure standing beside her. Her husband walked in and shouted 'Who's that? What's he doing here?' whereupon the figure, which did not seem to be totally 'solid', bolted out of the open kitchen door.

On another occasion, Mrs Evans was returning home one evening with the family dog. She saw, in the light from a street lamp, a tall figure. The figure was completely black and seemed to be wearing some kind of helmet, making her think of a 'frogman'. At this moment her husband walked out of the front door and again shouted 'Who's that? What's he

doing here?' (he was convinced by now that this was Mrs Evans's lover).

As her husband shouted, and as the dog started to bark her 'warning bark', the figure *glided* forward, going *through* her neighbour's front garden hedge!



On another day, in broad daylight, Mrs Evans encountered a 'strange little man' who appeared in front of her and passed by her. On turning around, expecting to see his back, she was shocked to find that he had vanished! The man was small, about five feet tall, olive skinned, large, round dark eyes, and black hair, slicked straight back.

He seemed to be wearing some kind of RAF uniform except that it looked made-to-measure, perfectly cut and stitched. His shoes looked brand new but were not the current fashion. He walked towards her with his arms held in the surgeon's 'scrub up' position, gazing straight ahead (at the level of her throat) with the dead, baleful eyes of a fish.



On yet another occasion, again in daylight, Mrs Evans was out walking, and she came upon a small van parked in the road. The van was white, with what looked like blue clouds and flowers painted on it.

As she approached the van, its door suddenly opened and a 'midget' jumped down in front of her. She just kept slowly walking forward as she and the midget gazed at each other. At first she thought she was seeing a cute 'doll' with an immaculate check shirt and dungarees, but she was startled as she looked into his eyes, which were jet black, marble-like, with two white dots where the pupils should have been.

He seemed to have Eskimo features, with dull black, dead straight hair, roughly cut in a 'page boy' style. He seemed to have a 'knowing look' in his eyes, which disturbed her. As he passed by her she tried to look over her shoulder to see him, but her neck did not seem to be moving normally and she could only see him out of the corner of her eye.



Mrs Evans thought he seemed to be a 'freak' of some kind, although he was perfectly proportioned. In this case and with the 'RAF man' though, it was the eyes which made her realise that she was not seeing something 'normal'.

Another encounter came one evening in Mrs Evans's front garden. She noticed movement within a large bush which was

in the garden, as if a cat or other small animal was inside it. She remembers that everything seemed unnaturally still, not a breath of wind. Slowly, the bush began to part in two or three places. Instead of the cat that she was expecting, she was amazed to see faces, seemingly those of children.

When she realised that these were not children, she froze, and the hairs on the back of her neck stood up on end. She began to hear soft 'clucking' sounds, the sort of noise one makes when trying to 'make friends' with an animal. What she saw made her think of elves, pixies and the like. They did not seem to be totally solid looking and the bushes covered their lower bodies. As their misshapen hands extended out towards her she decided that she had seen enough and ran indoors, trying to scream but being unable to do so because of her constricted throat.

As she ran upstairs, intending to dive under her bed, her husband called out to her, asking if she had seen what it was that had just bolted out of the front garden. Later, with her heart still fluttering, she came down and looked nervously outside. The 'elves' were gone, but she saw, walking towards her down the bridle path near her home, a dark figure lit by an aura that moved with it, showing its short curly hair and the shape of its face, but not its features. She realised that this figure matched the description given to her by her next-door neighbour of something *she* had seen in her own house.

Other Strange Happenings

Besides her 'strange men' sightings, Mrs Evans has had a wealth of other unexplainable experiences. Although most of these did not occur until over a year after her (first?) MIB sighting, and although Mrs Evans herself does not make any connection between the MIB and later happenings, the number, variety and

richness of her experiences are clearly worthy of being summarised here.

Mrs Evans is unsure of the exact dates of most of these happenings, but most of them occurred January – November 1979.

- As a young girl in 1947 there was a poltergeist in the family home, although she herself did not realise this and her parents (who hadn't heard of the 'poltergeist' phenomenon at the time) did not tell her about it until many years later.
- As a teenager she had an 'out of body experience', although not a 'conventional' one. She was fully conscious at the time, and in a standing position.
- October 16th, 1973 – her father sees a 'massive' UFO
- Winter 1977/Spring 1978 – Mrs Evans sees (with her husband) her first UFO.
- Christmas 1978 – early new year 1979 – UFOs, hauntings, poltergeists. Her husband and neighbours also experience these phenomena, but her house seems to be the 'focus'. She begins to notice strange marks, burns, bruises, and puncture marks on her skin, which seem to appear in the mornings after 'restless' nights.
- 12 April 1979 – 'sunburst lights' UFO
- 1 May 1979 – 'golden ingot' UFO

(Mrs Evans reports seeing 'about a dozen' UFOs from Christmas 1978 to November 1979; three of these sightings would be classed as 'CE1'.)

- A blood-like substance appears 'out of thin air' at her home. Also a 'transparent, jelly-like' substance.
- Strong smells – she, her husband and her neighbour see a small, yellowish cloud, accompanied by a strong smell

of sulphur. On another occasion a strong, 'overpowering' smell of incense. Also smells of 'zoo animals' cages' and 'wet animal fur'.

- On two occasions when 'something unusual' passed over her head, she felt a 'click, or tap, on [her] temples, rather like a tiny electric shock'.
- She finds out for the first time that her father is part Native American, her mother Celtic Welsh-Irish Romany.
- Her neighbour also sees a 'figure' in her own house. She almost burst into tears when Mrs Evans chided her about it. Another neighbour, at 3 am, saw a UFO 'gliding' down the road, reported it to the police.
- Her purse rises from the table, flies through the air and lands in her left hand.
- The kettle whistles as if boiling, but there is no water in it, and the gas is not turned on.
- Flames come out of fingernails, which turn bright turquoise overnight, the colour being on the *underside* of the nail.
- A 'paper tape streamer' appears out of nowhere and moves through the air in her lounge. It bears the words: 'Don't be afraid - we are coming back in October'. (Nothing happens to Mrs Evans next October, but a poltergeist starts up in her neighbour's house at the end of September.)
- Her milkman sees her standing at her front door and waves to her, then he turns round and sees her walking down the street towards him! Other people report seeing her at various other places where she just 'couldn't have been', sometimes with a large, shaggy, gold-coloured dog – a type of dog she had never owned. A remarkable *doppelgänger* case.

- She had strong premonitions about the murder by the IRA of Louis, Earl Mountbatten of Burma (27/8/79), she sees the words 'SHADOW' and 'V'; an air crash in the UK (non-specific, but an air crash was reported the next day); the eruption of Mount St Helens, Washington State (18/5/80; she sees the name 'Helen' and thinks it is a woman called Helen who is going to 'blow up'.)
- Uri Geller 'TV suggestions' work for her – she restarts a watch which has a totally flat battery and which hasn't worked for two years.

As the events of 1979 unfolded, Mrs Evans began to feel more and more stressed and troubled. She went to see her Doctor, who did some blood and urine tests, but could find nothing wrong. She came under more and more pressure from her husband, who became convinced that the 'figures' were her lover.

Assessment

Mrs Evans's MIB experience is unusual in that she did not begin to see UFOs until some time *after* she saw the MIB, who did not 'warn' her about anything and did not speak with her or communicate with her in any way. It was also unusual that the MIB must have been seen by other people (the assistant who served him in the grocer's for example), which must be powerful testimony in support of the reality of her experience. (Also the MIB did not turn up in a black 'limo', although this is, in fact, *not* all that unusual in MIB cases.)

The fact that there were other witnesses to many of her subsequent experiences, and the fact that other people themselves had odd experiences, again makes their reality difficult to gainsay. There is also much supporting evidence for her UFO sighting claims. Examination of newspaper cuttings from the local press reveal a rash of sighting reports from the Portsmouth, Southampton and Isle of Wight areas

running from 1975 – 1979. On a personal note, I lived in the Portsmouth area from October 1975 – October 1977, and I am as sure as I can be that I saw a 'real UFO', sometime in 1976.

Could Mrs Evans have been perpetrating Jungian *projections* which were so powerful that others could see them and sense them in other ways? This must remain as pure, unprovable speculation. She reports suffering from an 'upset stomach' after each incident, and later suffered from partial amnesia. These symptoms are vaguely reminiscent of Albert Bender's 'demonomania', but there is no suggestion that she indulged in the same fantasies that Bender apparently did.

There also appears to be no evidence of schizophrenia in Mrs Evans's case. She had no delusions, and if she did have hallucinations then many other people must have had the same hallucinations at the same time, a clearly untenable conclusion. When she once asked a doctor if she had ever been schizophrenic, he laughed and said 'Who the hell told you that?'.

Mrs Evans (who swears she 'never touches a drop'!) seems to me to have a lively, intelligent, humorous, 'colourful' and *sincere* character; a remarkable lady who has had some remarkable experiences.

Postscript

A chance remark by Mrs Evans provides a tantalising clue that Ted Pratt, who was with Joyce Bowles during her 'CE3' encounter near Winchester of 14 November 1976, may have had his own MIB experiences. (Joyce Bowles reported at the time receiving a 'threatening' telephone call.) At the time of writing, this possible link is being followed up.

Women in Black

At this stage of his research the author has not come across *any* cases of women in black. Of course, one of the strange visitors to Dr Herbert Hopkins's son and daughter-in-law (see page 17) appeared to be female, although she wasn't dressed in black.

Albert Bender saw women in *white* (see page 11), and most 'Bogus Social Workers' (a possible new MIB-type 'entity') are women. See page 32.

Men in White

Whilst the mystery visitors invariably come dressed all in black (but usually with white shirts), there are (albeit very rare) variations on this theme. Albert Bender saw *women in white* (see page 11), and there is at least one case of a man in white.

A Man In White, A White Car, A Black Helicopter

Lorraine (who had already had encounters with 'alien creatures') was living in Cornwall at the time. One evening she had just had a 'blazing row' with the other people in the house and felt she had to get out. She just grabbed a jumper and walked.

It was about midnight, and Lorraine walked down to the centre of the village where she was living and sat in the bus shelter. She was gazing at the stars, and noticed one that seemed brighter than the rest, which suddenly started to move slowly downwards. Her mind was still on the argument she had just come from though, and she didn't pay much regard to this.

Suddenly she heard, in the distance, the screeching of a car moving at high speed down the hill towards the village. She

thought this unusual, as at the time (late spring/early summer) the tourists had only just started to come down, and she thought that a car would surely not be coming to the village at that speed and at that time of night (it was about a quarter past midnight by now). The car, which by now Lorraine could see was large, American looking and white, slowed to a 'normal' speed as it entered the village. It drove slowly around the village green and came to a stop right in front of her.

The car was gleaming white, seemingly brand new. The upholstery was white and the steering wheel was white but the tyres, although dark, were not black. A young man was sitting in the car, dressed in a white polo-neck jumper, white trousers, white shoes, and a white baseball cap. His hair was blond and shiny, reminding her of a doll's hair. He was wearing sunglasses, which seemed more in the fashion (at the time) of ladies' sunglasses.

The man didn't look at her, he just sat in the car and Lorraine only saw him in profile. He appeared to be young and good looking, with no beard growth, smooth skin as if he didn't have to shave. She began to feel that the man had come for her, and that she could go in the car if she wanted to. Given the emotional situation she had just come out of, she felt very tempted to get in, but she managed to stop herself just in time.

The car continued to sit there. Lorraine noticed that there was no smell of exhaust fumes (to which she was very sensitive), and no sound of the engine ticking over. Indeed, everything was very quite. Despite the car's noisy arrival, no-one in the village seemed to have stirred. Suddenly the car moved off. She watched it get to the bottom of the hill, then she wasn't aware of it any more.

Suddenly she began to feel very frightened, although she wasn't sure why. She became

aware of the village clock and she was sure that it was quarter to two or two o'clock, which confused her because the car had arrived at half-past twelve at the latest, and had only been there for a few minutes. She began to make her way back to the house, running not walking, which was unusual for her, as she wasn't comfortable with running.

As she neared the house she became aware of a helicopter, very loud, close to the ground, seemingly alongside her. It moved slowly, at her pace. It appeared to be black, and showed no lights at all. She was surprised that, given the very loud noise, the villagers weren't opening their doors and windows to see what was happening. She became frightened, and began to run faster.

She noticed that the helicopter seemed to have some kind of searchlight which was sweeping down towards the ground. The light didn't seem to fan out like a normal searchlight beam, it stayed the same width all the way down to the ground. She became convinced that the light was 'meant for her' and that she mustn't let it touch her. She stayed close to the wall at the edge of the road, feeling somehow that if she did that the light beam couldn't touch her.

She finally reached the house, banging breathlessly on the front door (she hadn't taken a key), with the helicopter right behind her. Her husband James came to the door, and she frantically shouted at him to let her in, as there was a helicopter chasing her. He was mystified, as he couldn't see or hear a helicopter, but Lorraine was still convinced, saying that the helicopter must have gone.

Assessment

Asking people in the village the next day, Lorraine was shocked to learn that no-one else had heard or seen the helicopter, or the white car.

How did she know that the man in white was wearing white socks and trousers, if he didn't get out of the car, and she didn't get in? Lorraine is certain that she remembers these features though, so the speculation must be that she *did* get in, or the man *did* get out, but that she doesn't remember that. Or could she have had some kind of 'telescopic sense', which other 'close encounter' experiencers have reported?

Lorraine's account must be seen in the context of two close encounter experiences she had had previously. Apart from the total reversal of colour, several important features of the encounter are clearly consistent with a 'typical' MIB encounter.

MIBs in History

Although the modern MIB era began in 1952 (or 1947?), there are reports of MIBs (or entities very much like them) from earlier times.

The 1896-97 'airship wave' in the United States is fairly well-known, but it is probably less well-known that the start of the wave was preceded by the appearance of a 'mystery man' who claimed to have invented a new kind of airship.

Early in November 1896, *before* the first airship report appeared, a stranger visited the office of a prominent attorney in San Francisco. He had with him detailed drawings of a new kind of airship which operated using compressed air. He wanted the attorney to help him obtain a patent. The man seemed intelligent and articulate, and appeared to be in his late forties, and was of 'dark complexion and dark eyed'. He was very well dressed and projected an aura of being wealthy.

The man, who was never identified in newspaper reports of his claims, proved untraceable. A few days after the first

airships started appearing over San Francisco however, the man appeared again, this time visiting an even more prominent legal adviser, one William Hart. The man claimed to be the inventor of the airships, showed Hart the drawings, and again asked for advice on patenting his design.

The man said he was not a citizen of California, and came only to test and perfect his airship. He said he didn't want to make any money from his invention, nor was he looking for investors. Hart found this especially strange, saying that 'I will admit that this is the first time to my knowledge that anybody had anything in California in which he didn't want anybody to invest money'.

There are also reports of entities very similar to MIBs from much earlier times, especially when one relaxes the 'blackness' requirement for 'genuine' MIBs and concentrates on the 'mystery visitors' aspect.

'Three men' appeared before Abraham and ate and drank with him (Genesis 18:2). Abraham's elderly wife, Sarah, well past child-bearing age, gave birth to Isaac after a visit from the three men (Genesis 21). John Keel in *Operation Trojan Horse* speculates that the three wise men who brought gifts to the Christ Child (described as 'dark skinned men from the East') may have been another example of Biblical MIBs.³ (Matthew 2.)

Bedroom visitations of a 'man dressed in black' were made to 'an exceptionally intelligent woman of the peasant class' during the North Wales religious revival of 1905. The man visited the woman on three nights in succession, at midnight, giving

her a message which she was 'forbidden to relate'.

A key figure in the revivalist movement was preacher Mary Jones. Mary was well known at the time for the mysterious lights⁴ that appeared around her as she preached. On one occasion, as Mary was preaching, a black 'apparition' appeared, being seen by two bystanders, one of whom uttered an involuntary prayer. Immediately, one of Mary's 'lights' appeared. The light shot out a white ray at the figure, which promptly disappeared. There are two further reports from this period of black figures which transformed themselves into large black dogs – another well-known type of mysterious 'entity'.

Montague Summers, writing in his book *The Werewolf* (1933) describes a case from 1603, in south-western France. A young man confessed in court to several acts of werewolfery, culminating in the kidnapping and eating of a child. He said he was acting under the orders of 'The Lord of the Forest', who he described as a tall dark man, dressed all in black. Summers had no hesitation in describing the dark man as the devil.⁵

The Buddhist demon god Kal Bahairab is shown in a Nepal temple as having *black* skin. Richard Baxter, a 17th-century writer, tells of a 'pious, credible woman' from London, who was encouraged to hang herself by the Devil, in the shape of a big, black man.

³ JK mistakenly states that the three men came to King Herod to *predict* the birth of Christ. In fact, Christ had already been born at this point in time.

⁴ Further details of the North Wales religious revival lights may be found in *BOLIDE - A Preliminary Report* (BUFORA, 1997).

⁵ The colour black, and the Devil (always depicted as being black) have long been associated with evil. The ancient Greeks knew of *daimons*, who were intermediaries between men and the gods. Paul in I Corinthians (10:20) stigmatised the daimons as being *evil*, daimon being later translated as *demon*.

MIB Characteristics and Theories

Characteristics

Men In Black are consistently reported as having some or all of the following physical attributes (although it is important to note that the word 'usually' should precede each attribute). They:

- wear black suits with white shirts and black ties, all seemingly brand new, fitting perfectly as if tailor-made, and having razor-sharp creases
- have 'dark' complexions, and have an 'oriental' or 'foreign' appearance
- have expressionless facial features
- speak in stiff, formal, phrases, which often sound like the lines in the script of an old Hollywood 'B' movie
- appear in threes
- (when there is more than one) look the same, as if identical; when walking, they walk 'in formation'
- travel in large, black, old-model cars (usually Cadillacs or Lincolns in the USA, Rolls Royces or Jaguars in the UK), which appear to be brand new and have untraceable registrations. Sometimes strange insignia are reported as appearing on the car.
- appear only rarely outside the USA
- have smooth, featureless skin, no beard or 'shadow', no sign that they ever need to shave at all
- have shiny black hair, brushed with not a hair out of place
- possess knowledge known only to the witness
- have unusually broad shoulders and a narrow waists
- walk bolt upright with a 'stiff' gait.

Other consistently reported characteristics of MIB encounters are:

- they are regarded by witnesses as being real at the time of the sighting, but are later recognised as having unreal characteristics of appearance or behaviour
- they usually appear to the witness when he/she is alone
- they never leave behind any tangible proof of their existence
- they do 'impossible' things, especially in the manner of their appearance and disappearance.

Theories

So what *are* Men In Black? There seem to be three schools of thought:

1. They are government agents.
2. They are 'projections' (hallucinations) of the witness.
3. They are 'real', in a sense.

That MIBs are agents of the CIA or the MoD or similar organisations is perhaps the favourite theory of ufology's 'conspiracy' and 'coverup' enthusiasts. This model assumes that governments know all about UFOs, and that if witnesses 'see too much' they must be silenced before they can 'talk'.

The USAF certainly took the MIB phenomenon seriously in the 1960s, as reports were coming through of MIBs claiming to be Air Force Officers.

On March 1, 1967, Lt. General Hewitt T. Wheless, the Assistant Vice Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force sent the following memorandum to a number of defense agencies, including Strategic Air Command (SAC):

'Information, not verifiable, has reached Hq USAF that persons claiming to represent the Air Force or other Defense establishments have contacted citizens who have sighted unidentified flying objects. In one reported case an individual in civilian clothes, who represented himself as a member of NORAD, demanded and received photos belonging to a private citizen. In another, a person in an Air Force uniform approached local police and other citizens who had sighted a UFO, assembled them in a school room and told them that they did not see what they thought they saw and that they should not talk to anyone about the sighting. All military and civilian personnel and particularly Information Officers and UFO Investigating Officers who hear of such reports should immediately notify their local OSI offices.'

Jim Moseley writes to tell of another possible reason for MIBs being thought of as flesh-and-blood humans:

NICAP (the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena), based in Washington, DC, was for many years the principal UFO investigation and research group in the USA. It was formed in 1956, and from 1957 to 1969 was headed by retired Marine Corps Major Donald Keyhoe; NICAP was dissolved in 1973.

NICAP investigators would visit UFO witnesses, flashing their identity cards and asking them questions about their sighting. They would strongly urge the witnesses **not to talk to anyone else** about their sighting, leaving them with the impression that they had been visited by government agents, and often genuinely frightening them. The real reason for this, of course, was that NICAP did not want the witnesses' story released to any other UFO organisation. There was much rivalry between UFO groups then (and nothing has changed!).

Impersonating a military or police officer is a serious offence (in all countries) and it seems unlikely that anyone would want to perpetrate such a hoax just for 'a laugh'.

Mitigating further against the 'government agents' hypothesis are the MIB's worldwide appearances, their peculiar looks, and the strangeness of their actions. All in all, this hypothesis seems easy to dismiss.

This researcher is not qualified to comment on the hypothesis that Men In Black are Jungian 'projections' of (the internal fears of) the witness, or that the witness is experiencing the hallucinations and delusions of paranoid schizophrenia. If the MIB witness takes the MIBs at face value and believes their threats, then any paranoia that is present will be reinforced.

The physical symptoms of paranoia and schizophrenia (headaches, nausea, lacunar amnesia) are, however, often reported by MIB witnesses. However, whilst most MIBs appear to a lone witness, there are many well-documented cases of MIBs appearing to multiple witnesses, and so if the schizophrenia hypothesis is to hold then all of them must have had the same hallucination at the same time, a clearly untenable conclusion.

It is also apparent from many reports that the witnesses are convinced *at the time* that their visitors are *real*. The witnesses carry out 'normal' actions with them - open the door for them, talk to them, make drinks for them (which sometimes they *do* drink), and the visits often go on for some considerable time. All of these observations must surely mitigate further against (although they cannot lead to the total rejection of) the hallucination hypothesis.

We are left with the hypothesis that MIBs are real - but in what sense? We have already discussed and all but dismissed the hypothesis that the MIBs are flesh-and-blood humans. This leaves us with the notions that the MIBs are (extraterrestrial) *aliens* or that they are *entities* of some other kind.

The 'aliens' hypothesis is popular with the 'ETH-ers', those who believe that UFOs are space ships from the stars, with aliens as their pilots. (This belief is popular in the United States, less so in Europe.) The assumption seems to be that the MIBs are robots or androids of some kind, sent to silence the witnesses of UFOs, especially 'close encounter' percipients.

It is certainly true that many MIB reports describe MIBs as having 'mechanical' attributes (the toneless voice, the way of walking, the expressionless visage, the lack of wrinkles on the skin). One report even describes a green wire running up the back of an MIB's leg, which becomes visible when his trouser leg rides up! What would be the purpose of the aliens in using MIB androids in this way? Could they be:

- genuinely trying to prevent the witness from talking about something 'secret' that they have seen, possibly something that would be of interest to rival alien groups?
- conducting test runs of androids which are supposed to emulate human beings as far as possible, perhaps with some sinister 'infiltration' or 'takeover' project in mind?
- simply spreading 'misinformation' about their motives?

The MIBs certainly *do* display many non-human characteristics, and those who totally accept the ETH (Extra-Terrestrial

Hypothesis) will probably be happy with this explanation.

The final hypothesis presented here (and the author's money is on this one) is that the MIBs are a modern variation of other 'entities' that have appeared throughout recorded history. Such entities have been named as angels, demons, djinn, fairies, poltergeists, mothmen, appearances of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the classic Adamski-type aliens and, of course, the 'greys'.

Could it be that the classic 1950s/'60s/70s MIB, which always conformed closely to the stereotype of a 'secret service' man, may have been somehow keyed in to the 'cold war'? Now that the cold war is over, could we expect to see different MIBs, probably ones not wearing black at all? (I know of one case from Puerto Rico (1988/89) where a 'stranger' definitely has *some* classic MIB attributes, but is wearing ill-matching *coloured* clothing.)

If MIBs are changing, and given that they appear to lag behind current 'fashions' by several years, might it be possible to *predict* what sort of MIBs people will be seeing in the next millennium? Indeed, could this change (if there is one) already be occurring? Could it be that, following many well-publicised reports of child abuse in recent years, people's fears of nuclear annihilation have been replaced by fears for their children?

Another phenomenon, another possible 'entity' that has been reported increasingly in recent years is that of the **Bogus Social Worker** (BSW). BSWs are usually female (have the MIB 'controllers' fallen foul of modern equal opportunities regulations?) and, as with MIBs, operate singly, or in groups of two or three. Their *modus operandi* is to call on the mothers (almost always mothers, not fathers) of babies or

young children and ask to examine the children, sometimes saying they must take them away.

Sometimes they seem to know nothing about those they say they have called to see, at other times they seem to possess intimate knowledge of the case. They always flee when asked to produce identification. They are always smartly dressed and heavily made up, with some perceptive people saying that they look slightly 'strange', reminding them (the female BSWs anyway) of a man in drag.

There was a wave of BSWs in the Sheffield area of the UK in 1990, with over 250 reports being received by August of that year. A newspaper offered a £10,000 reward for the capture of a BSW, and a full-scale police operation was launched. The publicity given to BSW cases may have produced copycats – in 1992 in Scotland a man was arrested for posing as a social worker and interfering with a child (probably an honest paedophile). BSWs are not just a UK phenomenon, cases have been reported from the USA.

[A full study of BSWs is beyond the scope of this monograph; interested readers are referred to *Fortean Times* magazine, issues 57, 66 and 97.]

In Summary

The MIB phenomenon would seem to give sociologists the chance to study a modern myth in the making. To deny the reality of at least some MIB cases would bring into question the nature of reality itself. This is where most researchers, including this one, reach a full stop.

Columbia's MIB Film

1 August 1997 sees the UK release of Columbia Tristar's *MEN IN BLACK*. This is a 'sci-fi comedy' with only a tenuous connection to the true MIB phenomenon. The following is from Columbia's official press release:

'Protecting the earth from the scum of the universe', *Men In Black* stars Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones as Agents K and J - the universe's best kept secret. Working for a highly-funded yet unofficial government agency, they provide immigration services and regulate all things alien on earth. While investigating a series of unregistered close encounters, the MIB agents uncover the deadly plot of an intergalactic terrorist who is on a mission to assassinate two ambassadors from opposing galaxies currently resident in New York City. In order to prevent worlds from colliding, K and J must track down the terrorist before the earth is destroyed in the bargain. **They are our best, last, and only line of defence. They work in secret and they dress in black.**

A Brief Description of BUFORA and its Activities

About UFOs

The modern study of unidentified flying objects (UFOs) is commonly held to have started with the report of Kenneth Arnold. On Tuesday 24th June 1947 Arnold, a private pilot, reported 'nine peculiar aircraft' near Mount Rainier, Washington State, USA. In fact there appear to have been many reports over the years before Arnold's report. In the UK there are reports of strange aerial phenomena going back at least to the turn of the century.

There are many theories about the possible origins or nature of these objects

including, amongst others, UFOs may be natural phenomena and UFOs may be advanced technology. BUFORA recognises that there are a number of explanatory hypotheses and does not advocate any particular theory.

About BUFORA

BUFORA was founded in 1962, as a federation of regional UFO groups throughout the UK. Many of these groups were formed in the 1950s. These included the British Flying Saucer Bureau, founded in 1952, which is believed to be the UK's oldest UFO group. In 1962 the group was known as the British UFO Association, changing its name in 1964 to the present British UFO Research Association. BUFORA became a company limited by guarantee in 1975. This means that in the event of BUFORA being wound up each member's undertaking to cover any outstanding debts is limited to 1 pound. BUFORA is registered under the UK Data Protection Act, and amongst other things membership records are held on a computer database. (It is the policy of BUFORA **not** to release membership records to third parties.)

BUFORA is run entirely by volunteers, relying solely on its members to fund and carry out its investigation, research and educational activities. The day-to-day running of BUFORA is in the hands of a Council of Management drawn from the members.

Membership of BUFORA is open to all who support the aims of the association, and whose application is approved by the Council of Management.

Aims of BUFORA

The three aims of BUFORA are:

1. To encourage, promote and conduct unbiased scientific research of unidentified flying object (UFO)

phenomena throughout the United Kingdom.

2. To collect and disseminate evidence and data relating to unidentified flying objects.
3. To co-ordinate UFO research throughout the United Kingdom and to cooperate with others engaged in such research throughout the world.

Activities of BUFORA

In pursuit of its aims, BUFORA supports active Investigation and Research teams. The Investigation team carries out on-site field investigation of cases, whilst the Research team gets involved in activities such as statistical research and technical support activities. Major research projects are underway to computerise BUFORA's case records and in the field of witness-lead investigation. These activities are backed up by a press cutting service and extensive libraries of case reports and published literature on UFO phenomena. The heads of both the Investigation (Gloria Dixon) and the Research (Steve Gamble) teams are members of the Council of Management of BUFORA. Both are assisted in organising the activities of their sections by advisory committees made up of members with a special interest in these activities.

BUFORA organises in London a programme of monthly lectures (September to June) on a variety of UFO-related topics. Additionally, regional meetings are held, and every other year BUFORA co-sponsors the International UFO Congress.

Members receive, free of charge, six issues per year of its regular publication *UFO Times*, which carries details of investigated reports and results of research projects. Members may also elect to receive six issues per year of the *UFO Newsfile* for a

small charge. *UFO Newsfile* is a collection of the best newspaper clippings received from BUFORA's newsclipping service. *UFO Times* is edited by Mike Wootten and Andy Roberts, *UFO Newsfile* is edited by Mike Hudson.

BUFORA operates with British Telecom the UFOCALL hot line, which carries information about reports and updates on events (phone: 0898 12 1886; note charge currently 50p per minute at all times). These pre-recorded four minute messages are updated every two weeks.

In recent years BUFORA has established its international reputation by its investigation and research work, and a number of major publications. BUFORA is a founder, and the UK representative organisation of the International Committee for UFO Research (ICUR). BUFORA currently provides the Chairman (Bob Digby), the Secretary (Steve Gamble) and Treasurer (John Spencer) on the ICUR executive.

BUFORA is the publisher of the *UFO Lexicon*, which is an international glossary of UFO-related terms in ten languages. BUFORA is involved in a number of collaborative projects with other UFO groups both throughout the UK and the rest of the world. BUFORA is actively seeking to promote local branches of its members throughout the UK and the rest of the world.

BUFORA Publications

The *BUFORA Journal* was published from 1965 until 1982 when it was replaced by the *BUFORA Bulletin*. From 1979 to 1989 BUFORA also published the *Journal of Transient Aerial Phenomena*. In 1989 the *Bulletin* and *JTAP* were combined and relaunched as *UFO Times*.

In addition to *UFO Times*, BUFORA has published a number of booklets and papers

on specific aspects of research and investigation (for example our Vehicle Interference Report and Investigator Handbook), or as in-depth case studies of specific reports (eg The Livingston Encounter). BUFORA publishes *UFO World*, a series which is a review of UFO investigation and research throughout the world. Recent publications include *UFOs 1947-1987* (published by Fortean Times [1987]), *Phenomenon* (published in the UK by Macdonald & Futura [1988] and by Avon in the United States), *Fire in the Sky* (BUFORA [1989]) and *Controversy of the Circles* (BUFORA [1989]).

Details of publications currently available (including back issues of Journals) can be obtained from the registered office (enclose sae please). Some BUFORA publications are also available through Spacelink Books, 115 Hollybush Lane, Hampton, TW12 2QY England; and Arcturus Book Service, PO Box 831383, Stone Mountain, GA 30083-0023, USA.

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Acknowledgements

A special thank you to Steve Gamble.

Thanks also to Brenda Baker, Keith Basterfield, Peter Brookesmith, Karen Brooks, Linda Bull (for divorcing me, and so giving me the time to do this), Mark Cashman, Paul Clarke, Richard Conway, Joe Daniels, Gloria Heather Dixon, Bob Digby, 'Mrs Evans', Hilary Evans, Steve Gerrard, Rod Howarth, Judith Jaafar, Graham Knewstub, Stuart Livesey, Andy Lunn, Jim Moseley, Dennis Plunkett, Andy Roberts, Steven Shipp, Colin Silk, John Spencer, Chris Walton, Philip Walton, Dugald Wilson.

